

April 14, 2014

Mr. Lars Barber, Mr. Alex Brunton, and Mr. Jeff Bellile.

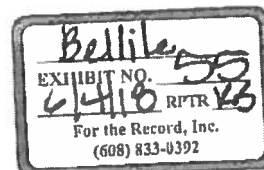
I am writing in response to the letters Alex Brunton wrote earlier criticizing my work performance.

Alex, your comments are grossly inappropriate, because they completely mischaracterize my work performance and work ethic, because the nature of your criticism illustrates an utter lack of respect for me personally, and because this type of behavior on the part of a person in a supervisory role is corrosive of morale and productivity. You are both aware that Alex's, attacks on my credibility, in letters and in meetings, only started recently, as of my performance review on December 10, 2013. Prior to this time, your feedback to me had all been positive. As Lars has noted, Alex's recent criticism has not been presented in a constructive manner, but has only attacked my professional conduct and work ethic. The nature of this criticism, and the evident ill-will that it contains, has made working here at Baird difficult and highly uncomfortable for me due to what I perceive to be a hostile work environment.

As discussed and to further characterize the situation, Alex is a challenge to work with given how busy he is and how he manages his time accordingly. He is often cancelling meetings last minute or simply not attending them, as we all noted on President's Day when he didn't attend the meeting he scheduled despite the concerns voiced to him when he scheduled the meeting (he was cautioned that it was a Canadian holiday and he should not schedule for that particular date). He is commonly unresponsive to my email and phone messages. He frequently provides no feedback on internal updates that I've prepared for him. This lack of communication and irregular meeting attendance has, on occasion though not in regularity, caused me to deprioritize preparation for internal tasks, when I can put my time toward other more high-value tasks such as continuing project-related work, meeting client needs, and pursuing business development tasks. It's been very frustrating spending time to put together a project update presentation or something similar and have him repeatedly not attend the scheduled meeting time or engage in communication.

To say that I have been unavailable or difficult to access is also inaccurate. I always attend scheduled meetings and if I am for some reason away from my desk, I am always available by personal cell phone or email. Like all professionals these days, I have my email on my phone so I stay constantly informed and can respond promptly to any needs. My work calendar is kept up to date on my whereabouts, available for anyone to take a look at, and if I'm sick or going to be late, I let Emily and Matt know as soon as I possibly can.

In light of Alex's failure to communicate regarding the Gowanus project, it's again been very unproductive and isolating as I have been left out of project update meetings. I was not invited to participate in the group discussions and was singled out to not be included on project emails with the rest of the group. In phone conversations I had with Alex, I requested he give me some context for my efforts related to the rest of the project so I could understand how my modeling work fit with the project objectives, but he refused. A flat out no to such a request seems unreasonable and unacceptable and makes me wonder how Baird's interests are served by such



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conduct. This conduct seems to be highly unprofessional. It also undermines the interpersonal working relationship we need in order to be a successful, high functioning work team.

To say that I somehow slacked off with my efforts on the project is also untrue. I invested considerable time learning as much about this project as I could as fast as possible despite Alex's failure to communicate important information regarding the project. For the weeks I was working on the project, I worked full days and evenings trying to get up to speed on project background and context on my own and with other team members, learned how to use the modeling software needed for the project, and then worked to edit the model to meet project objectives. Alex has no basis to assert I did not do this work. Making claims based on periodically observing whether I'm logged-on is untenable, and grossly insulting.

With respect to the office hours I worked during the weeks on the Gowanus project, I was typically getting in to the office between 8:30 and 9am since I had been up until midnight or later working on the project. These work hours are consistent with my practice over the past three and a half years, during which I have performed at a high level per earlier performance discussions, and never received any negative feedback. Again, it seems reasonable that with so much effort being exerted, I could take the hours needed to rest up for the next day. And, of course, if there was ever a meeting scheduled for earlier, I would be in attendance.

In general, for the course of my employment with Baird, we have had the flex hours in place and it was my understanding, because of what I was told when I began employment here, that core work hours were between 9 and 3, with people coming in early if they needed to leave earlier and vice versa. From the more recent emphasis on 8-5, I have been adjusting my schedule to get in earlier and am currently getting in to the office between 8 and 8:30. I commonly work well over 50 hours per week, but moreover, I work the hours necessary to get the job done.

I would also like to mention that neither my performance nor attendance has been called into question for the first three and a half years of my employment and that this is all a very sudden change. Previously, all my evaluations were commendable and I've received considerable positive feedback on my project work.

With the sudden shift to greater responsibility after Mark's departure, I've had a lot to learn in a very short amount of time with very little guidance from others. I've put forth a solid effort, working longer hours and evenings. I've also made several requests to attend project management training courses to improve my skills, but these requests have not been honored. I know I haven't always done things in the way that someone with more project management experience would, but I am a fast learner and do not make the same mistakes twice.

Regarding the apparent sudden change in perspective, the week before my review meeting with Lars and Alex, I was chatting with Alex online and he mentioned that we'd be doing my review when he was in town. He said, (paraphrasing) "Of course, nothing to worry about there. All good stuff." It was thus quite a surprise that his story was so different when we sat down to talk in the meeting. In regard to feedback, it is most beneficial to provide it promptly following when an event occurs. It is never appropriate for a supervisor to "save up" any concern that affects work performance or behavior.

Furthermore, I am surprised that Alex cannot take the time to explain project context to me or call me to discuss any of these issues he may be having working with me, but instead takes the time to write letters about it. I find it rather counterproductive and a poor use of everyone's time. I feel that if you, Alex, truly wanted to resolve things and find a way for us to work more smoothly together we would talk about it, but time after time you have shut me out and made yourself unavailable. It has been very frustrating and unmotivating. As I've mentioned, I think we would all benefit greatly if you, Alex, were more collaborative and constructive in your approach recognizing your supervisory responsibilities include setting a positive example, effective communication, and providing timely feedback. When I consider these supposed 'performance concerns' collectively I have to wonder at whether or not there is a double standard being created here. I am accused of not communicating, working flexible hours, while I could make the same comments back to Alex in regard to his work hours and communication. I would suggest that this is counterproductive, however.

I think the meeting we had the week of April 10th is a good example of the types of frustrations I've been having at work. Again, the Capers Ridge project comes up as illustration of how my business development efforts have been going unnoticed by Alex. He cancelled our monthly BD meeting that week, but Ben and I met anyway without Alex's participation, since these efforts are of such a critical nature. Alex, Lars, and I met the following day and it was emphasized how essential leads and BD efforts are – which is odd that Alex would cancel the BD meeting the previous day, but then immediately follow the next day with talking about how crucial these meetings are to our success. With the slightest mention of the Capers Ridge project as part of my upcoming work, Alex noted that this was now Fiona's project and no longer my concern. As we talked about before, I still feel as though my year plus effort going after this project is not something to be overlooked so quickly. I went from doing basically no business development work, and without any coaching from anyone at Baird, to full effort on business development and have this Capers Ridge project to show for my efforts, along with a few smaller jobs I was able to secure. I am proud of my work and it is extremely discouraging for Alex to dismiss my efforts, and the value they've brought the company.

When I think of what it means to work for a great company, I don't think this is the sort of thing anyone would picture. We should be helping each other out and cheering each other on for the hard work and long hours, instead of always saying it isn't enough. We are here because we are passionate about the work we do and committed to creating outstanding products for our clients. I think that any of our shortcomings should be seen as an opportunity to help guide each other to increased greatness, not as an opportunity to chide each other and decrease enthusiasm.

Sincerely,

